#### Message

From: Lindstrom, Andrew [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP

(FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=04BF7CF26AA44CE29763FBC1C1B2338E-LINDSTROM, ANDREW]

**Sent**: 9/26/2018 3:54:07 PM

To: Azzam, Nidal [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group

(FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=c697ee439a44482eb3d86873ba792177-Azzam, Nidal]; Washington, John

[/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group

(FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=fdc3e8ce9f1d45c4894881ff420ca104-Washington, John]

Subject: RE: Weekly Compass: September 25, 2018

### NIdal,

John's work clearly suggests that there is long range transport of legacy (PFNA) and replacement compounds (CIPFPECAs).

So yes, I would expect transport of Solvay compounds to surrounding states. We should be checking this out as John suggested yesterday.

I would expect Chemours that chemicals also migrate regionally, especially if they were emitted to the air, but we didn't specifically look at this yet. We should.

### Andy

From: Azzam, Nidal

Sent: Wednesday, September 26, 2018 11:29 AM

To: Lindstrom, Andrew < Lindstrom. Andrew@epa.gov >; Washington, John < Washington. John@epa.gov >

Subject: RE: Weekly Compass: September 25, 2018

### Andy/John,

Do you believe that air deposition from Solvay or Chemours made it to PA or DE, or remained in NJ?

Nidal Azzam
Base Program Management Section, Chief
Hazardous Waste Programs Branch,
Clean Air and Sustainability Division
USEPA Region 2
290 Broadway, 22nd Floor
New York, NY 10007
212-637-3748 Office



From: Lindstrom, Andrew

Sent: Wednesday, September 26, 2018 8:56 AM

To: Azzam, Nidal < Azzam. Nidal@epa.gov>

Subject: RE: Weekly Compass: September 25, 2018

Nidal,

I think we should be doing a lot more of these kinds of briefings.

Our approach to this type of research has changed significantly in the past few years. And as I noted yesterday, this is complicated and it is going to take a lot of effort for us to explain how we are doing this work and what it actually means.

We need the states and Regional folks to understand better so they help us figure out what is going on in all of these different places.

I'm happy to help in any way I can.

Thank you very much,

Andy

From: Azzam, Nidal

Sent: Wednesday, September 26, 2018 8:37 AM

To: Lindstrom, Andrew < Lindstrom. Andrew@epa.gov >; Buckley, Timothy < Buckley. Timothy@epa.gov >

Subject: RE: Weekly Compass: September 25, 2018

Tim/Andy,

I also got an email from a person from Region 3 who joined the call a bit late. He is interested in hearing the presentation again. If we are to present it again I will also invite the water division in our region. Please advise.

Nidal Azzam
Base Program Management Section, Chief
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Clean Air and Sustainability Division
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New York, NY 10007
212-637-3748 Office



From: Lindstrom, Andrew

Sent: Wednesday, September 26, 2018 6:31 AM

To: Cutt, Diana <Cutt.Diana@epa.gov>; Strynar, Mark <Strynar.Mark@epa.gov>; Azzam, Nidal <Azzam.Nidal@epa.gov>

**Cc:** O'shea, Marie < OShea.Marie@epa.gov>; Buckley, Timothy < Buckley.Timothy@epa.gov> **Subject:** RE: Weekly Compass: September 25, 2018

Dianna,

We had the briefing yesterday at 3:00 pm.

If there is enough interest elsewhere, maybe we could do it again for a slightly different group?

We're more than happy to talk with you about it anytime – please call if you'd like to learn more.

Please let us know what you think.

Thank you very much,

Andy

From: Cutt, Diana

Sent: Tuesday, September 25, 2018 9:06 PM

To: Lindstrom, Andrew < Lindstrom. Andrew@epa.gov >; Strynar, Mark < strynar.mark@epa.gov >; Azzam, Nidal

<Azzam.Nidal@epa.gov>

Cc: O'shea, Marie < OShea. Marie@epa.gov>

Subject: FW: Weekly Compass: September 25, 2018

Any chance Marie and I can sit in on this briefing? Thanks.

## **PFAS Study Briefing**

Next week, NERL will provide a briefing to Region 2 and Program Office representatives. The briefing will cover the preliminary findings of NERL's collaborative PFAS study with New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

Diana Cutt, P.G.
Hydrogeologist & Superfund
Technology Liaison (STL) for EPA Region 2
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cutt.diana@epa.gov



From: EPAResearchCompass

Sent: Tuesday, September 25, 2018 12:12 PM

To: ORD-ALL Feds and NonFeds and RSLs < ORDALL Feds and NonFeds and RSLs@epa.gov > Cc: Lincoln, Larry < Lincoln.Larry@epa.gov >; Barnett, Felicia < Barnett.Felicia@epa.gov >; Carter, Bobbi < Carter.Bobbi@epa.gov >; Gettle, Jeaneanne < Gettle.Jeaneanne@epa.gov >; Taylor, Dawn < Taylor.Dawn@epa.gov >; Klinger, Adam < Klinger.Adam@epa.gov >; Liljegren, Jennifer < Liljegren.Jennifer@epa.gov >; Pollard, Solomon < Pollard.Solomon@epa.gov >; Clarage, Meredith < Clarage.Meredith@epa.gov >; Fan, Shirley < Fan.Shirley@epa.gov >; Peffers, Mel < Peffers.Mel@epa.gov >

Subject: Weekly Compass: September 25, 2018



Weekly Update: 9/25/2018

Welcome to the Weekly Compass, your gateway to information about recent and upcoming ORD activities. If you have ideas for the Weekly Compass, please send them to the editors. To see past issues, visit the Weekly Compass archive on ORD@work.

### **Weekly Note from Jennifer**

ORDers- This week, Chris Robbins and I are visiting ORD's Western Ecology Division facilities in Corvallis and Newport, OR. While there, we will view the facility renovations and meet with researchers, managers, and staff from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and the Tillamook Estuary Partnership. I'm really looking forward to getting back to the west coast.

Also this week, the Regional Science Liaisons (RSLs) are in RTP for a business meeting with OSP. While there they will participate in a poster session, in demonstrations of ORD's online tools/resources, tour select ORD RTP laboratories, and meet to discuss Regional cross-cutting issues with ORD.

Bruce Rodan, Wayne Cascio, and Lisa Matthews will participate in the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) 2018 Annual Meeting this week, the largest gathering of state and territorial health officials, their executive team members, and other partners and federal colleagues working in public health. Wayne will join with two CDC officials to share current information and resources in a session titled. "Responding to Emergencies: Water, Drought, and Wildfires."

On Wednesday, we will have an all hands meeting at 2 pm ET, and we hope you can join us. As the fiscal year begins next week, it's a good time to take stock of our accomplishments as well as share plans for moving forward.

Finally, please make sure to complete your five mandatory trainings by Sept. 30; be mindful that there may different requirements for contractors and new hires. I look forward to talking with all of you tomorrow! - Jennifer

### **Quick Updates**

- Read the latest EPA press release about Hurricane Florence and check out the EPA response page for updates.
- EPA's Advancing Actionable Alternatives to Vertebrate Animal Testing for Chemical Safety Assessment RFA (short title: Alternative to Animal Testing), closes today.
- No Fear Act Training, COOP Training, FOIA Training, and Records Management Training are now available, training must be done by September 30
- EPA's Practical Methods to Analyze and Treat Emerging Contaminants (PFAS) in Solid Waste, Landfills, Wastewater/Leachates, Soils, and Groundwater to Protect Human Health and the Environment RFA (short title: PFAS in Landfills and Groundwater) is open for applications through **October 2**. Editor's note: this is a corrected link, previous editions incorrectly linked to a Sharepoint site. Please use this link for more info.
- Don't forget to check out the open opportunities on Talent Hub!
- You can read the This Week @ EPA newsletter here.
- Upcoming webinars:
  - RAF Ecological Risk Assessors Colloquium: Tuesday, September 25 Wednesday, September 26, 9-5 ET
  - Small Water Systems Research Webinar: Droughts and Flooding: Tuesday,
     September 25, 2-3:30 ET
  - Removal of Organic Contaminants from Polyethylene Drinking Water Pipes by Flushing: Wednesday, September 26, 1-2 ET
  - Computational Toxicology Communities of Practice: CompTox Chemistry Dashboard Version 3: Thursday, September 27, 11-12 ET
  - Internal SSWR Project Update Webinar: Single vs. Multi-Objective Approaches to Integrated Water Management: Monday, October 1, 1-1:30 ET
  - EPA-Wide IRIS Meeting: Wednesday, October 3: 2-3 ET
  - o ORD PFAS Webinar: Accessing Information for PFAS Using the US EPA CompTox Chemistry Dashboard: Wednesday, October 3, 2-3 ET
  - SERDP & ESTCP Webinar: Chlorinated Solvents Workshop Overview and Feature Projects: Thursday, October 4, 12-1:30 ET

Faces of ORD: NHEERL's Karen Blocksom

### In the Lab:

# Enter Your FY18 Fourth Quarter Data into TechTracker by September 30

The fourth quarter for Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18) is ending, and it will soon be time to develop the fourth quarterly report of TechTracker data. To ensure that all FY18 fourth quarter data is in the system prior to developing the report, we are asking that everyone create any remaining entries for technical support performed during the fourth quarter (July 1 through September 30, 2018) or add hours to existing entries as necessary for additional time spent on those tasks in that timeframe. Please have all applicable technical support hours for fourth quarter work entered into TechTracker by September 30. For any ongoing work that will extend into the next fiscal year, please close out the entry for that work for FY18 by entering 9/30/2018 as the end date. You will create a new entry for that ongoing work for FY19. If you have any questions, please contact your Program Support Coordinator.

### Release of PFAS Analytic Tools for EPA Use

EPA staff can now access the per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) Analytic Tools (and related PFAS Navigation Center). The PFAS Coordinating Committee had requested agency representatives from program offices review analytic and mapping tools that were developed by OECA. The tools were developed to integrate PFAS-related data in a common platform. Over the last 6 months, OECA has worked with program offices and Regions to develop tools that bring data sets together into a navigation page and a Qlik dashboard (maps and charts). The page is designed to be a starting point for data resources related to occurrence and potential sources of PFAS. It is now being co-developed with ORD with assistance from other program offices. The current version of the ECHO PFAS Analytic Tools are available to EPA staff only. EPA will be working to explore providing access to state, local, and tribal governments with the goal to bring in additional information that regulatory partners may be able to offer. This page, in its current form, is not slated for public release, but it is possible that some parts of this page be made public in the future. For more information (some links below require EPA LAN ID and password sign in):

- ECHO Data Visualization Gallery
- Direct Link to PFAS Data Navigation Center Webpage
- Direct link to the PFAS Analytic Tools
- Direct link to PFAS Analytic Tools documentation

## **ASTHO 2018 Meeting**

On September 26-27, Bruce Rodan and Lisa Matthews will participate in the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) 2018 Annual Meeting. ASTHO's Policy Summit is taking place today to engage in dialogue on critical public health topics and identify synergies, connections and policy needs during two rounds of Leader to Leader Executive Roundtable sessions. Executive Roundtables include a focus on Safe Drinking Water and other Environmental Health Issues: 1) Threats to our Nation's Drinking Water: PFAS (Dr. Peter Grevatt, EPA OW and Dr. Patrick Breysse, CDC/NCEH) and 2) Responding to Public Health Emergencies - Water, Drought and Wildfires (Dr. Wayne Cascio, EPA ORD and Dr. Patrick Breysse CDC/NCEH).

## E-Enterprise Leadership Council

The E-Enterprise Leadership Council (EELC) will meet September 26-27 in Washington, DC. NERL's Dr. Annette Guiseppi-Elie will present EPA's LEAN project on emerging contaminants during a session on "Building Towards an Adaptive Environmental Regulatory Future. The session will share real world examples to strengthen agencies' abilities to be more adaptive and address emerging issues. The session will also cover how the regulatory framework can be more adaptive and responsive exploring opportunities for EPA/state/tribal collaboration to increase the efficiency and timeliness of responses to emerging issues.

### **Deployment to Assist in Wildfire Response**

Beginning September 19, NERL's Gayle Hagler was deployed as part of the U.S. Forest Service's Air Resource Advisors Program. Hagler will assist in the air quality response for the Pole Creek and Bald Mountain, Utah fire response (See news coverage of this fire here). Hagler anticipates being deployed for approximately two weeks.

### PFAS Study Briefing

Next week, NERL will provide a briefing to Region 2 and Program Office representatives. The briefing will cover the preliminary findings of NERL's collaborative PFAS study with New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

# Using BioMAP to Assess Bioactivity-exposure Profiles of Complex Mixtures

On September 12, Toxicology In Vitro published Assessing bioactivity-exposure profiles of fruit and vegetable extracts in the BioMAP profiling system. NERL's Barbara Wetmore was the lead author and NCCT's Richard Judson, Keith Houck, Matthew Martin, Russell Thomas were among the co-authors. EPA's Toxicity Forecaster (ToxCast) research uses automated chemical screening technologies (i.e., high-throughput screening assays) to expose cells or proteins to chemicals and assess whether the cells or proteins change in ways that might indicate potential toxic effects. This program has been used to generate data on over a thousand chemicals, but few results have been reported for complex mixtures. In order to expand ToxCast mixtures data, the authors tested extracts from 30 fruits and vegetables using the BioMAP system. BioMAP is a commercial method that profiles 60 human primary cell-based models of tissue and disease biology with hundreds of clinically relevant protein biomarkers. The results showed differences from results with single chemicals, which highlights the challenges of interpreting bioactivity data and dose-response from complex mixtures.

# Stressors Impacting American-Indian/Alaska-Native Children

On September 6, Reviews on Environmental Health published Review of built and natural environment stressors impacting American-Indian/Alaska-Native children by NERL's Nirmalla Barros (ORISE), Nicolle Tulve, Daniel Heggem, and OSP's Ken Bailey. The study looked to identify chemical and non-chemical stressors from American-Indian/Alaska-Native (AI/AN) children's built and natural environments and use peer reviewed literature to evaluate their links to health and well-being outcomes. The study is important because children's exposures to these stressors affect their overall health and well-being, but American-Indian/Alaska-Native children may have a disproportionately higher burden of stressors from their built and natural environments. The researchers demonstrated that this population is understudied and made recommendations for future studies.

# Using CMAQ to Better Estimate Contributions of Wildland Fires to PM2.5 and Ozone

International Journal of Wildland Fire recently published "The impact of US wildland fires on ozone and particulate matter: a comparison of measurements and CMAQ model predictions from 2008 to 2012" by NERL's Joseph Wilkins, George Pouliot, Kristen Foley, Wyat Appel and Thomas Pierce. Even though EPA routinely estimates wildland fire emissions such as fine particulate matter ( $PM_{2.5}$ ) and ozone precursors in its National Emissions Inventory, there is a lot of uncertainty in these estimates. The authors used the Community Multiscale Air Quality (CMAQ) modeling system to employ a method to better estimate the impact of wildland fire emissions on air quality across the contiguous United States. The study estimated that from 2008-2012, fires contributed 11% to  $PM_{2.5}$  and less than 1% to ozone concentrations.

### GENERATE Demonstration for Region 4

Earlier this month, Region 4 hosted an internal EPA "Advance Forum" last week, covering a range of updates on tools and programs from the program offices and ORD. Primarily focused on air topics, the forum was open to EPA staff only. NRMRL's Rebecca Dodder was invited to give a demonstration and presentation of the GENERATE energy game. She presented background information on the U.S. energy system and associated environmental implications.

### Richardson Flat Tailings Superfund Site, Park City, UT

Earlier this month, NRMRL's Russell Neill and Justin Groves met with Region 8 staff at the Richardson Flat Tailings Superfund Site to discuss NRMRL's drilling capabilities and potential to provide assistance at the site. The site includes a tailings dam and an impoundment area due to previous mining operations, resulting in the presence of mine tailings in sediments and surface water.

## Field work at Oregon State University (OSU), Corvallis, OR

NRMRL's Steve Hutchins, Bart Faulkner, Mark White, Russell Neill, and Justin Groves conducted post-harvest deep soil nitrate sampling at the OSU Vegetable Research Farm last week. This research is part of the SSWR Nutrient Sources and Contributions to Impairment Project, and focuses on transport of water and nutrients through the vadose zone of an irrigated corn field. Results from the core samples will be correlated with data obtained from shallow lysimeters at the site. In addition, slug tests were conducted at the wells for hydrological characterization.

## Beede Waste Oil Superfund Site, Plaistow, NH

At the request of Region 1, last week NRMRL's Eva Davis met with Region 1 to discuss steamenhanced extraction at the former Beede Waste Oil Superfund Site. This is part of a continuing effort to provide technical support for selection of a remedial technology, design of the remedial system, and technical input on the progress of the remediation. The 41-acre site is a former waste oil storage and recycling facility with contamination in the subsurface and groundwater. Representatives from Region 1 and the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Quality attended, as well as consultants for the Beede site.

### Fecal Indicators in Marine and Freshwater

NRMRL's Orin Shanks and Mano Sivaganesan, in collaboration with NERL's Asja Korajkic and Brian McMinn published the paper, "Extended persistence of general and cattle-associated fecal indicators in marine and freshwater environment," in *Science of the Total Environment*. This paper examines the decay of key general fecal indicator and microbial source tracking genetic markers to better understand the extent of their persistence in fresh and marine surface waters. Findings identify important trends with potential ramifications for future water quality management use in areas impacted by cattle fecal pollution.

# **Urban Ecosystem Services Framework**

NRMRL's Alessandro Ossola (former NRC postdoc), Laura Schifman (former NRC postdoc), Dustin Hermann (ORISE postdoc), Ahjond Garmestani, and Matt Hopton are co-authors on the paper, "The provision of urban ecosystem services throughout the private-social-public domain: a conceptual framework." Published in *Cities and Environment*, this paper discusses a theoretical framework based on the concepts of ownership, tenancy, and stewardship, in which people, as mediators of ecosystem services, regulate the provision of services throughout the private-social-public domain.

# **SBIR Company Highlight**

Ammonia is one of the most commonly produced industrial chemicals in the United States. Although it exists naturally in humans and in the environment, excess ammonia in soil, water, and the atmosphere is a great concern. With support from EPA's SBIR Program, Vista Photonics, Inc. has developed a portable laser sensor to detect and measure ammonia in the atmosphere. Their technology has already been used for important applications such as monitoring the concentration of gases on the International Space Station, and the advances made with EPA funding will be leveraged for use on NASA's Orion spacecraft, which will support astronauts embarking on deep-space missions. The sensor's compact size and its fast and accurate readings will make it an essential tool for ensuring the health and safety of those aboard the spacecraft. Vista Photonics was also recently awarded an SBIR award from the Naval Sea Systems Command. The U.S. Navy is interested in deploying the laser sensors to monitor air quality in submarines. With refinement, the sensor also could prove to be an effective, noninvasive means for measuring ammonia in human breath and detecting liver or kidney dysfunction.

### Grantee Publication on Interpreting Data

As the amount and scope of modern data-generation continue to grow, methods for interpreting data has ever more daunting needs for transparency and interactivity. The interdisciplinary scientific nature of modern risk assessments as well as an informed public wanting to understand decisions made for commercial and public health reasons push the pressure further. In an article in BMC Bioinformatics, STAR grant researchers at the Texas A&M University describe their ToxPi (Toxicological Prioritization Index) as an analytical framework developed to enable integration of multiple sources of evidence by transforming data into integrated, visual profiles. The authors thanked their EPA colleagues (Kate Saili, Sid Hunter, and Tom Knudsen) for beta-testing and thoughtful ideas for improving functionality.

# Grantee Publication on Applying an Exposome Approach to Cancer Research

EPA-funded STAR research project, Using an Exposome Approach to Assess the Effects of PM2.5 on CVD Outcomes, at Meharry Medical College has published its innovative and cutting-edge research method to examine the health impacts of "the multiplicity of chemical and non-chemical toxicants to which people are exposed in the real world, over their life course, their impact on epigenomics and other biological systems, and their relationship to cancer onset, progression, and outcomes" in the August 27 issue of the journal, *Frontiers in Oncology*. The project challenges the scientific community to consider the influence of both internal and external environment, chemical and non-chemical stressors, risk and protective factors, and spatial and temporal dimensions of exposures in our models of cancer incidence, outcomes, and disparities. The innovative research approach tries to extend the current exposome studies (genetics, epigenetics, and exposomics factors) to potentially identifying complete exposure pathways that lead to cancer. In coming years, the STAR "Total Environment" project aims to link external sources of exposure to biomarkers of exposure, biomarkers of disease, disease phenotypes, and population level disparities.

# SAB Quality Review of Two IRIS Assessment Peer Review Reports Quality review of draft peer review reports of two IRIS assessments -- Ethyl Tertiary Butyl Ether (ETBE) and Tert-Butyl Alcohol (TBA) - is on the agenda at the September 26<sup>th</sup> (virtual) meeting

of the Science Advisory Board.

# **NJ Water Monitoring Council Meeting**

On September 26<sup>th</sup>, NCEA's Susan Cormier will present research at New Jersey's Water Monitoring Council meeting in Trenton, New Jersey. The meeting will be focused on conductivity, chlorides, and road salt. The presentation is entitled "Modeling background conductivity and biological extirpation." The audience will be composed of federal, state, local, academic, and

environmental organizations doing water monitoring in NJ (https://www.nj.gov/dep/wms/wmccmembers.html).

### Mid-Atlantic Sea Level Rise Workshop

Last week, Region 3 RSL Regina Poeske facilitated a workshop in Lewes, DE, on sea level rise and loss of coastal marsh, a high-priority issue for state and local partners. Regina worked with Jordan West (NCEA) to plan and coordinate the workshop, which covers topics such as assessing marsh vulnerability and implementing appropriate adaptation techniques to address coastal marsh loss. Attendees included staff from DE, NJ, MD, VA and federal partners from NOAA, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

# NHSRC Disaster Waste Planning and Response Tools Used to Prepare for Hurricane Florence

The I-WASTE online decision support tool was used to develop mapping products used in pre-Incident support for EPA and other responders. The tool was used to identify waste management facilities in NC, SC, and VA as well as to generate larger tables of facilities broadly available in Regions 3 and 4. Facilities are identified as potential recipients for hurricane-generated debris, and facility maps are coupled with other maps showing flooding in order to help assess which waste management facilities might be adversely impacted by the storm. Last week, EPA's EOC was fully activated, including the solid waste desk. EPA has a crucial mission in the recovery process from the hurricane, and providing technical support for the state's waste management decisions is a key part of this mission.

## Science Embassy Fellow Working To Improve Soil in Palau

NHEERL's Mark Johnson is well into his Science Embassy Fellowship in Palau, working with the Koror State Urban Garden Program (KSUGP) to promote home gardening for good diet, and food security. The KSUGP delivers Tabletop Gardens that contain only organic materials, such as compost and seagrass. Dr. Johnson is testing whether adding mineral soil, and biochar (charcoal, or 'sumi'), to the compost will help improve soil structure, and improve its ability to hold water and retain nutrients.

# **PFAS** briefing for California

ORD briefed California's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment and Department of Toxic Substance and Control staff on our PFAS research strategy. California reached out to ORD to request the meeting. ORD staff provided a summary of the PFAS research strategy, followed by more in-depth presentations on the two PFAS risk assessments (GenX and PFBS) and the tiered toxicity testing strategy. More information about ORD's PFAS research strategy is available here. Lists of the EPA PFAS chemical library and the 75 PFAS selected for tiered toxicity testing are available on the EPA CompTox Chemicals Dashboard (the entire library is available here and the 75 selected PFAS is available here).

## In the Office:

# Hispanic Heritage Month Event

EPA will conduct a Hispanic Heritage Month celebration Wednesday, Sept. 26 from 11 a.m. to noon (EDT) in the William Jefferson Clinton East building, Room 1152. Live streaming will be available via EPAtv. Note: EPAtv is only available through Internet Explorer while onsite on EPA's network and is not available remotely. This year's theme is "Hispanics: One Endless Voice to

Enhance Our Tradition." The event recording will be available Sept. 27 via the EPAtv-on-demand site. Hispanic Heritage Month runs from Sept. 15 through Oct. 15.

### **Personnel Security Clearance Delays**

With the current workload surrounding getting new badges for all employees, problems have developed in getting fingerprints for personnel security clearances in a timely way for new employees or current employees changing jobs, being promoted, etc. The Shared Service Center (SSC) cannot "sponsor" people, so they are relying on the Personnel Security Branch to do that in order for the actions to move ahead. Once sponsored, there have been instances where no openings were on the calendars for getting enrolled for fingerprinting, and employees are being told to go to non-EPA locations or are waiting for extended periods of time. The SSC has given OARS/HRD a point of contact in the OARM-RTP security office if this issue occurs. Once notified, they will try to fit that person into a time slot at the location where they will be working. Often morning slots are cancelled at the last minute, and they can fit someone in. Bottom line: Contact your OARS/HRD analyst if your employees are encountering delays in this process, and the HR analyst will work to move things along.

### September is National Suicide Prevention Month

Suicidal thoughts, much like mental health conditions, can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, or background. September is National Suicide Prevention Month and a time to remember to support those affected by suicide, raise awareness, and connect individuals with suicidal ideation to treatment services. It is also an important opportunity to ensure that colleagues, friends, and families have access to the resources they need to discuss suicide prevention. A free webinar titled "Building Resiliency" is open to employees Sept. 27 from 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. (EDT). Licensed Professional Counselor Cecelia Keelin of ESPYR – the EPA's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider – will present at the free webinar. The event will enable participants to assess their current level of resiliency and learn strategies for building resiliency. Registration is not required. Employees can view the presentation live on Adobe Connect. If you or your qualified family members need EAP services, call 1-888-635-3202 or visit the ESPYR website (use password USEPA). Additional resources can also be accessed on the EPA's EAP intranet site.

### **Accolades:**

# Honor for Excellence in Research On Aerosols and Inhalable Materials

NHEERL's Chong Kim has received the Thomas T. Mercer Award, given for demonstrated excellence in, and impactful contributions to, the field of medicinal aerosols and inhalable materials. The American Association for Aerosol Research and the International Society for Aerosols in Medicine jointly select the award winner. This is a prestigious and competitive international honor, and the first time an EPA scientist has received a major award from either organization.

# Dixy Lee Ray Award

Andy Miller (A-E Associate NPD for Climate) received the Dixy Lee Ray Award on September 15, presented by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, recognizing "significant achievements and contributions in the broad field of environmental protection."



## In the Community:

### EPA-RTP STEM Outreach Program

- Yesterday, the program hosted 15 high school cosmetology students from Mt. Zion Academy in Durham for building and lab tours, speed mentoring, and hands-on activities aimed at increasing their awareness of potential exposure, risk, or health concerns that might be relevant to their future career.
- Today, the program will host its annual STEM Education Training for EPA-RTP employees. The training will include hands-on STEM Education activities available for employees to use to communicate EPA science to the public. The program will begin with an Open House demonstration of several activities available for employee use as well as a sample EPA "Career Fair" booth. The remainder of the training will include in-depth sessions where employees will participate in activities for Ecosystem Services, Water, Air Quality, and Energy and Sustainability.
- On Wednesday, EPA will have its first "EPA Environmental Club" for 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders at E.K. Powe Elementary School in Durham. Environmental Club will meet weekly for six weeks, with two groups of about 15 students each week. Interactive, outdoor activities will be emphasized. Also on Wednesday, the program will lead a hands-on activity at W.G. Pearson Elementary School in Durham for its 2<sup>nd</sup> biweekly session in a STEM elective for 5<sup>th</sup> graders.
- On Thursday, the program will lead its 4<sup>th</sup> biweekly hands-on STEM activity for the afterschool program at Holt Elementary School in Durham. Also on Thursday, the program will participate as career role models in an afterschool program for African American males at Powell Elementary School in Raleigh.
- On Friday, the program will lead its first monthly hands-on STEM activity of the school year for a group of 4th graders at Green Elementary School in Raleigh.

Faces of ORD: NHEERL's Karen Blocksom



Name: Karen Blocksom Job/Position: Statistician

L/C/O or Program: NHEERL, Western Ecology Division in Corvallis, OR

### 1. When did you start at EPA?

I started at EPA as a statistician in NERL in September 2000 after spending two years as a contractor.

### 2. What's the most interesting thing about your job?

The most interesting thing about my job is getting to work directly with state or regional biologists to help them learn how to use some of the tools we develop for the National Aquatic Resource Surveys.

### 3. What's the most interesting thing in your workspace?

The most interesting thing in my workspace is a false-color satellite image of Death Valley National Park. It's one of my favorite parks (in the winter).

### 4. What's your favorite thing to do (besides come to work)?

I enjoy hiking and climbing a mountain once or twice a year with a local outdoor group.

### 5. What's your favorite lunch spot?

I rarely go out to lunch, but I do love Coffee Culture, where I treat myself to an amazing shortbread cookie about once a week.

### 6. If you could have one superpower, what would it be?

I would choose to be able to teleport wherever I wanted to. Then I could avoid my long commute and traveling long distances by plane to visit family. I don't enjoy the actual traveling part!.

### 7. What is your favorite movie?

I used to think that was an easy question (Rear Window), but there are a lot that I really love. I think one of my more recent favorites is Lord of the Rings, specifically the Fellowship of the Ring, partly for the story and partly for the incredible visual effects.

### 8. Describe any steps you take in your daily life to protect the environment.

A couple things I do:

- 1) I use reusable shopping and produce bags as much as possible, and have slowly convinced family members to start using them too.
- 2) I also try to use native plants in my yard to avoid having to water them.